



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

# Teaching Traffic Education in Montana

### Questions and Answers about Endorsement and Approval

*Based upon 10.13.310 Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM)*

#### 1. What is required in Montana to become a traffic education instructor and teach driver education?

- ☐ **A valid Montana educator license** issued by the Office of Public Instruction (OPI), [Educator Licensure Unit](#), Legal Division.
- ☐ **Approval as a teacher of traffic education** issued by the [OPI Traffic Education](#) (TE) Unit, with each renewal of teacher's Montana educator license. (Submit [TE05 Teacher Application](#) to the OPI.)
- ☐ **Initially, a minimum of 8 semester hours of credit coursework in traffic safety education leading toward a 20 semester credit minor.** The initial 8-semester-hour block must include a classroom and behind-the-wheel traffic education teacher preparation course.
- ☐ **To renew approval, 4 TE credits are required.** For each succeeding renewal of the Montana educator license, the teacher must accumulate an additional 4 semester hours of qualifying coursework that leads toward the TE minor requirements. Once the minor is achieved a TE99 teaching endorsement may be awarded. (Submit [TE05 Teacher Application](#) to the OPI.)
- ☐ **A valid Montana driver's license.**
- ☐ **A responsible driving record** (see ARM 10.13.310).

#### 2. Do I need a Montana educator license to teach traffic education?

Yes. Any valid Montana educator license is allowed by state law. Visit [OPI Educator Licensure](#).

#### 3. Once I obtain a TE endorsement, do I continue to apply for approval to teach traffic education?

Yes. The TE approval and TE endorsement are not the same. After a TE endorsement is earned and appears on the educator license, no additional TE coursework is required. However, to keep approval to teach driver education, the instructor must meet the cyclical requirements for teacher re-licensure, and apply to the OPI Traffic Education Unit for TE approval.



A responsible driving record is required in addition to the approval requirements to be licensed and endorsed for Traffic Education. If the driving record is satisfactory, an approval letter will be issued for the duration of the licensure cycle. An instructor's driving record is reviewed each year the instructor teaches traffic education. If an instructor does not maintain an acceptable driving record in accordance with Administrative Rules of Montana 10.13.310, their approval to teach will be revoked until such time that they are in compliance.

#### 4. Are there professional development opportunities for traffic education instructors?

Yes. The Montana Traffic Education Association (MTEA) is an active and supportive organization that offers many benefits to traffic education teachers. MTEA hosts an annual conference in a different Montana city each year and one college credit is available for full participation in the conference. Visit MTEA's website to learn more: <http://www.MTEAOnline.org>.

**5. Where can I take the required traffic education courses to obtain a TE minor?**

Montana State University – Northern (MSU-N) is the only Montana institution that offers a TE minor. The goal is to complete 20 semester credits in traffic education requirements. Contact MSU-N about cooperative efforts with other Montana universities that offer traffic safety-related courses and combining coursework from another college or university to qualify for the TE99 endorsement.

**6. Can Montana educator Renewal Units be used toward completing the coursework required for a TE minor and TE endorsement?**

No. Renewal Units do not qualify as college coursework, and, therefore, do not qualify toward the TE minor. However, MSU-N often offers college credit for qualifying conferences and workshops. If an individual signs up for the qualifying TE credit, pays the fees, and completes the assignments, the earned college credit may apply toward the minor. TE instructors may not receive college credit and Renewal Units for the same workshop or conference; only obtain one or the other.

**7. Are there exceptions to the TE approval process?**

Yes. State policy allows exemptions for emergency or extenuating circumstances if a school district is without a driver education instructor. In both cases, the objective is to assure continued TE instruction by qualified individuals and facilitate the completion of the TE99 endorsement by the teacher.

Both types of exemptions require documentation that the school has advertised the TE teacher vacancy without success and no other qualified instructors are available. In the case of the one-time, one-year emergency extension request, the instructor must outline how the deficient coursework will be completed during the following year.

In very unusual cases, an emergency extension of up to two years may be granted. For this one-time option, the instructor must also show how they will complete the TE minor and obtain the TE99 endorsement by the end of the extension period.

## **TRAFFIC EDUCATION CONTACTS AND RESOURCES**

**Regarding OPI Traffic Education endorsement and approval:**

Fran Penner-Ray, Director, [fpenner-ray@mt.gov](mailto:fpenner-ray@mt.gov)  
Patti Borneman, Specialist, [pborneman@mt.gov](mailto:pborneman@mt.gov)  
Traffic Education Program  
Montana Office of Public Instruction  
PO Box 202501  
Helena, MT 59620-2501  
(406) 444-4432 or toll-free: 1-888-231-9393  
Fax: (406) 444-2955  
<http://www.opi.mt.gov/Programs/DriverEd/>

**Regarding MSU-N Traffic Education minor and off-campus courses:**

Randy Bachmeier, Dean – Extension Services  
[rbachmeier@msun.edu](mailto:rbachmeier@msun.edu)  
Montana State University—Northern  
PO Box 7751  
Havre, MT 59501  
(406) 265-3730 or 1-800-662-6132 x 3730  
<http://www.msun.edu/distance/traffic.html>